



For Immediate Release
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Contacts:

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
Wendy Fox, 617-626-1453

Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission
Adam Burney, 508-459-3331

North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership
Jay Rasku, 978-248-2118

STATE AND REGIONAL PARTNERS BRING HERITAGE LANDSCAPE INVENTORY PROGRAM TO CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS

Planning Assistance Available to Towns

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), and the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership (NQRLP) today announced they are working in partnership to bring DCR's Heritage Landscape Inventory Program to central Massachusetts. The Heritage Landscape Inventory Program identifies significant landscapes and develops recommendations for their protection, working with local communities and regional organizations.

DCR and its partners are launching the project with two informational workshops to introduce area residents and organizations to the Heritage Landscape Inventory Program. Both will be held on Monday, December 3, the first at Spencer Town Hall, 8-9:30 a.m., and the second at Barre Town Hall, 4-5:30 p.m.

State Senator Stephen Brewer and Representative Anne Gobi helped secure \$35,000 in state funding to work with the following six communities: Brookfield, East Brookfield, North Brookfield, Spencer, Warren, and West Brookfield. DCR has made a commitment to provide another \$55,000 to expand the program regionally. As a result, the following 13 communities will also be eligible to apply to participate: Athol, Barre, Hardwick, Hubbardston, New Braintree, Oakham, Orange, Petersham, Phillipston, Royalston, Rutland, Templeton, and Warwick.

“To date, DCR has been able to assist 81 communities, providing them with the tools to leverage funds and generate support for the protection of their heritage landscapes,” said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. “We are thrilled that Senator Brewer and Representative Gobi have helped provide our agency with the support to continue to assist communities.”

“Preserving the natural history and environmental resources of this area is paramount to protecting the unique culture of Central and Western Massachusetts,” said Senator Brewer. “I am thrilled to see that DCR’s Heritage Landscape Inventory Program working diligently to assist these communities.”

Stated Representative Gobi, “I look forward to working with the communities and DCR to help strengthen and preserve natural resources that are important aesthetically, historically, and economically to the region.”

Lawrence Adams, executive director of CMRPC, said, “The many heritage landscapes within central Massachusetts are highly prized by its inhabitants. They provide a reflection of past achievements in agriculture, manufacturing, and civic life, and today continue to contribute through their town commons, cemeteries, and cultivated fields terrific visual character and quality of life. Preservation of these heritage assets is critical to the appreciation of not just what we were and are as communities, but also of what we will be in the future. DCR’s Heritage Landscape Inventory Program couldn’t be more important or timely.”

NQRLP Coordinator Jay Rasku said, “The Heritage Landscape Inventory program will assist our efforts to try to maintain the unique landscape of the North Quabbin region. This program will further our efforts to assist communities in the identification of their heritage landscapes, and work towards identifying future NQRLP partnership projects.”

To participate in the program, communities must complete an application form and provide a local project coordinator to facilitate the project on the municipal level. In exchange, communities will receive free technical assistance from DCR, CMRPC and NQRLP staff, and a professional consulting team. No matching funds are required.

This informational workshop is open to anyone interested in land conservation, historic preservation, environmental protection, and sustainable growth. Municipal staff and members of planning boards, conservation commissions, historical commissions, open space committees, and community preservation committees are particularly encouraged to attend.

Further information about the Heritage Landscape Inventory program can be found at www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/histland/Inventoryprog.htm.

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